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ABSTRACT

Guides institutions or evaluation teams on the preparation of a self-study report or evaluation based on ACCJC (Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges) 2002 standards. Emphasizes that institutions should use this guide as means for a more holistic evaluation through thoughtful dialogue and judgment about institutional quality. The guide was designed to create discussions that would lead to deeper considerations of accreditation standards than mere compliance. Discusses the importance and the methods of effective dialogue to promote the quality and the improvement of an institution. These 2002 ACCJC standards focus on student learning outcomes as a result of attending college in addition to past accreditation standards. Suggests questions and lists of possible sources of evidence in order to create a more informed discussion of student achievement, institutional performance and student learning outcomes. Contains five main sections: (1) Introduction; (2) General Information on Accreditation; (3) a description and method to effective Dialogue; (4) Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Evidence; and (5) Questions to Use in Institutional Evaluation for each of the ACCJC standards. The four standards include: (1) Institutional Mission and Effectiveness; (2) Student Learning Programs and Services; (3) Resources (human resources, physical resources, etc.); and (4) Leadership and Governance. Examples are also provided for each of the standards. (NB)

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Guide To Evaluating Institutions Using ACCJC 2002 Standards

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Introduction

This *Guide to Evaluating Institutions* is designed to be used by institutions preparing their Self Study Report as well as by teams conducting a comprehensive evaluation. The Guide is meant to provoke some thoughtful consideration about whether the institution meets the Accreditation Standards at a deeper level than mere compliance – it is intended to also provide some guidance for a holistic view of an institution and its quality. The common guide is predicated on the belief that both institutional members and outside evaluators use the standards to assess the institution, and that they ought to be using the same tools to conduct that assessment.

The Guide begins with "General Information on Accreditation", a description of the purpose and general process of accreditation. Readers should review this section each time they engage in activities associated with a comprehensive accreditation visit. It is important to be clear on the things accreditation seeks to accomplish, and the things it does not.

The next section describes "Dialogue", a key component of a quality institution and a necessary attribute for an institution that is trying to focus primary attention on student learning. The kind of dialogue described will be useful as institutions strive to support and improve student learning, as institution planning groups try to be self reflective and self evaluative in an effort to improve, and as teams consider the quality of college.

The next section, "Themes of Accreditation", describes six themes of quality that pervade the Accreditation Standards. While the individual standards are the key benchmarks or criteria an institution must meet, the standards themselves are interlocking. A careful read of the standards will reveal several themes that pervade the standards' definition of a quality institution. This section of the *Guide* has articulated six of those themes; they can provide a basis for a summative assessment of how well the institution is working as a whole.

A section entitled "Regarding Evidence" has been included to provide some guidance on the nature of good evidence that self study teams and evaluation teams will use to evaluate an institution. There are several different kinds of evidence required during an accreditation review – evidence of structure, evidence of resources, evidence of process, evidence of student progress, and evidence of student learning – and each requires careful consideration. Persons evaluating a college will want to be thoughtful about the kinds of evidence they consider, and the degree to which their conclusions are backed by the appropriate evidence.

The main body of the *Guide* is contained in "Questions to Use in Institutional Evaluation." Here the reader will find the Standards followed by questions about their application at an institution. These questions provide an interpretation of the standards and how they might be applied to an institution. The questions should **not** be used as a substitute for the standards; indeed, one could develop alternative questions from the standards that would probably be equally valuable. Rather, the questions are designed to guide a thoughtful examination of institutional quality. At the end of each standard, there is a list of potential sources of evidence. This non-exhaustive list is not meant to indicate that each of the document **must** be present, but that these **might be sources** of the evidence.

General Information on Accreditation

Accreditation as a system of voluntary, non-governmental self regulation and peer review is unique to American educational institutions. It is a system by which an institution evaluates itself in accordance with standards of good practice regarding goals and objectives; the appropriateness, sufficiency, and utilization of resources; the usefulness, integrity, and effectiveness of its processes; and the extent to which it is achieving its intended outcomes. It is a process by which accreditors provide students, the public, and each other with assurances of institutional integrity, quality, and effectiveness. Accreditation is intended to encourage institutions to plan for institutional improvement in quality and effectiveness.

Each institution affiliated with the Accrediting Commission for Community and Junior Colleges accepts the obligation to undergo a cycle of periodic evaluation through self study and professional peer review. The heart of this obligation is conducting a rigorous self study during which an institution appraises itself against the Commission's standards in terms of its stated institutional purposes. The cycle of evaluation requires a Comprehensive Self Study every six years following initial accreditation and a visit by a team of peers. The cycle includes a mandatory midterm report in the third year as well as any other reports requested by the Commission. All reports beyond the Comprehensive Self Study may be followed by a visit by Commission representatives.

Teams conduct a review following completion of a self study in order to determine the extent to which an institution meets the standards. Team members, selected for their expertise from member institutions, make recommendations for improvement to an institution, commend exemplary practices, and provide both the college and the Commission with a report of their findings.

It is the responsibility of the nineteen-member Commission to determine the accredited status of an institution. In determining this status, the Commission uses the team report, the self study, and the accreditation history of the institution. The Commission decision is communicated to the institution via an action letter and is made public through Commission announcements.

Dialogue

As the Commission was developing the new standards, it became evident that if an institution is to ensure that its resources and processes support student learning and its continuous assessment, as well as the pursuit of institutional excellence and improvement, an "ongoing, self-reflective dialogue" must become central to institutional processes. This dialogue, it was thought, should serve to provide a college community with the means to integrate of the elements of the standards, resulting in a comprehensive institutional perspective that would serve to verify integrity and "promote quality and improvement." Accordingly, the subtitle of the Introduction to the Accreditation Standards is "Shaping the Dialogue."

A dialogue is a group discussion among "colleagues", often facilitated, that is designed to explore complex issues, create greater group intelligence and facilitate group learning. The idea of "colleagues" is important; dialogue occurs where individuals see themselves as colleagues. In order for the group to engage in dialogue, individuals must suspend their own views to listen fully to one another in order to understand each other's viewpoints. Groups engaged in dialogue develop greater insights, shared meanings and ultimately, collective understanding of complex issues and how best to address them.

Dialogue improves *collective* thinking. A practice of dialogue can have benefits for the individual as well as the institution. Dialogue can help build self-awareness, improve communication skills, strengthen teams and stimulate innovation that fosters effective change. Dialogues are powerful, transformational experiences that lead to both personal and collaborative action. But dialogic discussions also allow controversial topics that may have in the past become sources of disagreement and division to be explored in a more useful context that can lead to greater group insight.

The Standards emphasize dialogue as a means for an institution to come to collective understanding of what it means to be learning-focused in the context of a particular institution's history and mission; of what the meaningful student learning outcomes at the program and degree level should be, and on how institutional resources and processes might be structured to support the improvement of student learning.

Unlike *debate*, in which most academicians are trained to seek to score points and to persuade, the goal of dialogue is mutual understanding and respect. Dialogue involves active listening, seeking to understand, giving everyone the opportunity to talk, and trying not to interrupt. A conscious commitment to engage in *dialogue* ensures that a group welcomes a range of viewpoints during its search for effective ways of addressing important issues. Retaining the use of a facilitator can help ensure that the ground rules are maintained and can help clarify themes and ideas.

While dialogue may not lead to a resolution of a conflict, it can lead to a makeover of the way in which the conflict is pursued from one which is destructive and divisive to one which is constructive and leads to personal and institutional growth. Too often on campus we avoid certain controversial topics or we take a perspective that leaves us in about the same place we started, with little to no additional understanding of the issue. By assisting in the discovery of common ground and by developing increased willingness to work collegially to illuminate and solve problems, dialogue has the potential to improve an institution's ability to deal with the inevitable disagreements that arise in the life of an institution.

The new Standards' focus on student learning calls for higher education institutions to deal with a very complex issue, improving student learning. It also calls on institutions to change–and to learn. Dialogue can be a powerful strategy for generating the creative discussions and collective wisdom that can enable institutional change.

Themes

Several themes thread throughout these standards. These themes can provide guidance and structure to self-reflective dialogue and evaluation of institutional effectiveness. The themes are as follows:

Institutional Commitments

The standards ask institutions to make a commitment in action to providing high quality education congruent with institutional mission. The first expression of this is in Standard I, which calls for an institutional mission statement that reflects the intended student population and the institution's commitment to student learning. Throughout the standards, the commission asks that institutions insure the consistency between mission and institution goals and plans and insure that the mission is more that a statement of intention — that it guides institutional action. The standards also ask that an institution

commit to supporting student learning as its primary mission. The number of references to student learning outcomes throughout the standards are designed to guide this institutional commitment to student learning. The standards' requirement that the entire institution participate in reviewing institutional performance and developing plans for improvement of student learning outcomes is intended to help the institution sustain its commitment to student learning. Finally, the requirement that an institution regularly review its mission statement asks that the institution periodically reflect on its mission statement, adapt it as needed, and renew commitment to achieving the mission.

Evaluation, Planning, and Improvement

The standards require ongoing institutional evaluation and improvement to help serve students better. Evaluation focuses on student achievement, student learning, and the effectiveness of processes, policies, and organization. Improvement is achieved through an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation. The planning cycle begins with evaluation of student needs and college programs and services. This evaluation in turn informs college decisions about where it needs to improve, and the college identifies improvement goals campus-wide. Resources are distributed in order to implement these goals. When resources are insufficient to support improvement goals, the college adjusts its resource decisions to reflect its priorities or seeks other means of supplying resources to meet its goals. Once improvement plans have been fully implemented, evaluation of how well the goals have been met ensues. Thus, the planning cycle is comprised of evaluation, goal setting, resource distribution, implementation, and reevaluation.

Student Learning Outcomes

The development of Student Learning Outcomes is one of the key themes in these standards. The theme has to do with the institution consciously and robustly demonstrating the effectiveness of its efforts to produce and support student learning by developing student learning outcomes at the course, program, and degree level. This demonstration of effectiveness requires that learning outcomes be measured and assessed to determine how well learning is occurring so that changes to improve learning and teaching can be made. It requires that faculty engage in discussions of ways to deliver instruction to maximize student learning. It requires that those providing student support services develop student learning outcomes and evaluate the quality of their policies, processes, and procedures for providing students access and movement through the institution. And it requires that student learning outcomes be at the center of the institution's key processes and allocation of resources. Ultimately, this theme requires that an institution engage in self-analysis leading to improvement of all that it does regarding learning and teaching.

Organization

The Standards require colleges to have inclusive, informed and intentional efforts to define student learning, provide programs to support that learning, and to evaluate how well learning is occurring. This requirement means that the institution must have in place the organizational means to identify and make public the learning outcomes, to evaluate the effectiveness of programs in producing those outcomes, and to make improvements. This requirement for adequate staff, resources and organizational structure (communication and decision making structures) is not new to accreditation standards, but the new expectation is that these be oriented to produce and support student learning. Consequently, they will be evaluated in part by how well they support learning.

Dialogue

The standards are designed to facilitate college engagement in inclusive, informed, and intentional dialogue about institutional quality and improvement. The dialogue should purposefully guide institutional change. All members of the college community should participate in this reflection and exchange about student achievement, student learning, and the effectiveness of its processes, policies, and organization. For the dialogue to have its intended effect, it should be based on reliable information about the college's programs and services and evidence on how well the institution is meeting student needs. Information should be quantitative and qualitative, responsive to a clear inquiry, meaningfully interpreted, and broadly communicated. The institutional dialogue should result in ongoing self-reflection and conscious improvement.

Institutional Integrity

This theme deals with the institution's demonstrated concern with honesty, truthfulness, and the manner it which it represents itself to all stakeholders, internal and external. This theme speaks to the intentions of an institution as well as to how it carries them out. It prompts institutional assessment of the integrity of its policies, practices, and procedures and to how it treats students, employees, and its publics. It asks that the institution concern itself with the clarity, understandability, accessibility, and appropriateness of its publications; that its faculty provide for open inquiry in their classes as well as student grades that reflect an honest appraisal of student performance against faculty standards. It has an expectation of academic honesty on the part of students. It requires that the institution demonstrate regard for issues of equity and diversity. It encourages the institution to look at its hiring and employment practices as well as to its relationship with the Commission and other external agencies. Finally, it expects that an institution be self-reflective and honest with itself in all its operations.

Accreditation, Quality Assurance and Evidence

In the early 1960's Initial Accreditation required evidence that basic structures and processes were in place and minimal resources were available to operate an institution. For example, the existence of mission statement, a president, a governing board, etc., provided evidence of structures, while sufficient full time faculty with appropriate training, sufficient funds, a decent sized library, etc., provided evidence of resources sufficient to run a college. In addition evidence of processes for supporting academic freedom, curriculum development, governance, decision making was also required.

Beginning in the 1990's, accreditation added a requirement that colleges provide evidence that students had actually moved through college programs and were completing them. This *student achievement data* provided evidence that students were completing courses, persisting semester to semester, completing degrees and certificates, graduating, transferring, getting jobs. The standards of this era also specified that institutions provide evidence that program review was being conducted and that plans to improve education were being developed and implemented.

The initial focus on structures, resources, processes was an approach to quality that was built on what any good organization needed to survive. It was not particularly education-oriented, but it was necessary to support education. The second focus on students moving through the institution began to address the results of college efforts concerning student achievement.

These 2002 standards of accreditation add another element to accreditation's focus of attention. They focus on what students have learned as a result of attending college—*student learning outcomes*. This focus requires that the institution provide evidence of a conscious effort to:

- make learning the institution's core activity;
- support and produce student learning;
- measure that learning;
- assess how well learning is occurring;
- make changes to improve student learning;
- organize its key processes to effectively support student learning;
- allocate its resources to effectively support student learning; and
- improving learning as an important means to institutional improvement.

Characteristics of Evidence

Evidence is the data upon which a judgment or conclusion may be based. As such, it is presented in answer to questions that have been deliberately posed because an institution regards them as important. Evidence tells all stakeholders that an institution has investigated its questions and knows something about itself—it knows what it achieves.

For evidence to be useful, it must have undergone analysis and reflection by the college community. The dialogue required for analysis and reflection is an integral part of the capacity an institution has for using the evidence it has accrued to make improvements.

Good evidence, then, is obviously related to the questions the college has investigated and it can be replicated, making it reliable. Good evidence is representative of what is, not just an isolated case, and it is information upon which an institution can take action to improve. It is, in short, relevant, verifiable, representative, and actionable.

The evidence the institution presents should be about achievements such as number of graduates, number of transfers, retention rates, etc. Evidence should also be about student learning outcomes—skills, knowledge, abilities, and affective development. And, finally, evidence should be about the effectiveness of the institution's procedures and policies.

The evidence the institution presents should be about achievements such as the number of graduates, the number of transfers, retention of students from term to term, etc. The institution should also provide evidence about student learning outcomes – the skills, knowledge, abilities, and affective development students gain as a result of their education. Finally, the institution should provide evidence of the effectiveness of the institution's procedures and policies, its resources and structures.

Self study should be only one phase of on-going institutional evaluation, and an evaluating team should be able to see how the institution develops and uses evidence of effectiveness as part of its ongoing evaluative processes. Institutions should gather and use both qualitative and quantitative evidence, and often must use indirect as well as direct measures to assess institutional effectiveness. Good evidence used in evaluations has the following characteristics:

- It is intentional, and a dialogue about its meaning and relevance has taken place.
- It is purposeful, designed to answer questions the institution has raised.
- It has been interpreted and reflected upon, not just offered up in its raw or unanalyzed form.
- It is integrated and presented in a context of other information about the institution that creates a holistic view of the institution or program.
- It is cumulative and is corroborated by multiple sources of data.
- It is coherent and sound enough to provide guidance for improvement.

It is important to note that evidence per se does not lead to confirmations of value and quality. Rather, the members of the college community, or of the higher education community, must arrive at the decisions about value and quality through active judgments. The purpose of good evidence is to encourage informed institutional dialogue that engages the college community and leads to improvement of its processes, procedures, policies, relationships, ultimately with the effect of improving student learning. Good evidence should provide the means for institutions or evaluators to make sound judgments about quality and future direction, but at the same time it will probably stimulate further inquiry about institutional quality.

Institutions report or store good evidence in many formats, and institutions engaged in self study or evaluative teams may find good evidence in a number of sources, including institutional data bases; documents such as faculty handbooks, catalogues, student handbooks, policy statements, program review documents, planning documents, minutes of important meetings, syllabi, course outlines, and institutional fact books; from survey results; from assessments of student work on examinations, class assignments, capstone projects, etc; from faculty grading rubrics and analyses of student learning out comes; from special institutional research reports.

Questions to Use in Institutional Evaluation

This *Guide* is designed to provoke thoughtful dialogue and judgment about institutional quality by college communities engaged in self study and by peer evaluation teams assigned to affirm the quality of institutions. As either group seeks to evaluate an institution's ability to measure up to the Standards of Accreditation, inquiry — asking questions and seeking answers — is necessary before judgment is made. What follows are some questions designed to provoke thoughtful reflection about institutional quality. These questions are designed to be asked by either the institution engaged in self-reflection as part of self study, or by the peer evaluation team that visits the campus. The *Guide* also provides a list of possible sources of evidence that can be used to develop answers to the questions raised through the process of inquiry.

The questions, and lists of possible evidence, are designed to inform discussions of *student achievement*, such as number of graduates, number of transfer students, retention rates, job placement rates; *institutional performance* such as the presence and effective use of institutional resources, structures, and policies, to achieve the institutions educational mission; *student learning outcomes* such as the acquisition of knowledge, skills, abilities and attitudes that the institution intended student to learn, and which are defined by the institution as the intended learning outcomes.

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates strong commitment to a mission that emphasizes achievement of student learning and to communicating themission internally and externally. The institution uses analyses of quantitative and qualitative data and analysis in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation to verify and improve the effectiveness by which the mission is accomplished.

A. Mission

The institution has a statement of mission that defines the institution's broad educational purposes, its intended student population, and its commitment toachieving student learning.

- What does the institution's mission statement say about its educational purposes? Are these purposes appropriate to an institution of higher learning?
- Who are the college's intended students? How does the institution determine its intended population? Is the identified population a reasonable match for the institution's location, resources, and role in higher education?
- What processes does the institution use to foster college-wide commitment to student learning? Does the mission statement express this commitment?

1. The institution establishes student learning programs and services aligned with its purposes, its character, and its student population.

   - Have discussions been held among key constituents regarding the relevance of the mission statement to student learning?
   - What statements about student learning are included in the mission statement? How do these statements make explicit the purposes of the institution?
   - How does the institution know that it is addressing the needs of its student population?

2. The mission statement is approved by the governing board and published.

3. Using the institution's governance and decision-making processes, the institution reviews its mission statement on a regular basis and revises it as necessary.

   - How effective is the institution's process for periodic review of the mission statement? Does the process allow for incorporating the interest of the institutions stakeholders?
   - How does the institution know that the way the mission statement is developed, approved and communicated to all stakeholders is effective? What circumstances prompt changes to the statement?

4. The institution's mission is central to institutional planning and decision- making.

   - How effectively does the mission statement prompt planning and decision making? To what extent is the mission statement central to the choices the college makes?

B. Improving Institutional Effectiveness

The institution demonstrates a conscious effort to produce and support student learning, measures that learning, assesses how well learning is occurring, and makes changes to improve student learning. The institution also organizes its key processes and allocates its resources to effectively support student learning. The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by providing 1) evidence of the achievement of student learning outcomes and 2) evidence of institution and program performance. The institution uses ongoing and systematic evaluation and planning to refine its key processes and improve student learning.

1. The institution maintains an ongoing, collegial, self-reflective dialogue about the continuous improvement of student learning and institutional processes

   - ◇ How has the college structured its dialogue? How well does the college embrace and understand the purpose of the dialogue?
   - ◇ When, how, and about what subjects has the college engaged in dialogue? What impact has the dialogue had on student learning?
   - ◇ Does the dialogue lead to a collective understanding of the meaning of data and research used in evaluation of student learning?

2. The institution sets goals to improve its effectiveness consistent with its stated purposes. The institution articulates its goals and states the objectives derived from them in measurable terms so that the degree to which they are achieved can be determined and widely discussed. The institutional members understand these goals and work collaboratively toward their achievement.

   - ◇ What criteria does the college use to determine its priorities (set goals)?
   - ◇ Is there broad-based understanding of the goals and the processes to implement them? Is there institutional commitment to achieve identified goals?
   - ◇ How well does the college implement its goals?
   - ◇ Are goals articulated so that the institution can later determine the degree to which they have been met?
   - ◇ To what extent does the college achieve its goals?

3. The institution assesses progress toward achieving its stated goals and makes decisions regarding the improvement of institutional effectiveness in an ongoing and systematic cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation. Evaluation is based on analyses of both quantitative and qualitative data.

   - ◇ To what extent does the institution understand and embrace the notion of ongoing planning?
   - ◇ Does the college have a planning process in place? Is it cyclical, i.e., does it incorporate systematic evaluation of programs and services, improvement planning, implementation, and re-evaluation? How college budgeting of resources follow planning?
   - ◇ To what extent are institutional data available and used for planning? Are data analyzed and interpreted for easy understanding by the college community?

5. The institution uses documented assessment results to communicate matters of quality assurance to appropriate constituencies

   - ◇ What institutional databases does the college support? Are these databases accurate, current, and accessible?
   - ◇ By what means does the college publicize its statistics on student achievement and student learning to the public?
   - ◇ How does the college assess whether this means is effectively communicating information about institutional quality to the public?

6. The institution assures the effectiveness of its ongoing planning and resource allocation processes by systematically reviewing and modifying, as appropriate, all parts of the cycle, including institutional and other research efforts.

   - ◇ What processes does the institution use to assess the effectiveness of its cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, resource allocation implementation, and re-evaluation?
   - ◇ How effective is the college planning process for fostering improvement?

7. The institution assesses its evaluation mechanisms through a systematic review of their effectiveness in improving instructional programs, student support services, and library and other learning support services

   - ◇ What mechanisms does the institution use to gather evidence about the effectiveness of programs and services?
   - ◇ How effectively do evaluation processes and results contribute to improvement in programs and services?

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard I

Listed below are examples of sources of evidence for Standard I:

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

A. Mission

- Evidence that analysis of how institutional goals and objectives are linked to the needs of the student population has taken place.
- Evidence of analysis of how the mission statement is developed, approved and communicated to all stakeholders.
- Evidence of analysis of the process used for the periodic review of the institution's mission; evidence that process is inclusive.
- Evidence that the mission statement provides the preconditions for setting institutional goals.
- Evidence of analysis of how the cycle of evaluation, integrated planning, implementation, and re-evaluation relates to the mission and is used for institutional improvement.

B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness

- Evidence that the institution has developed processes by which continuous dialog about both student learning and institutional processes can take place.
- Evidence of broad-based participation in the dialogue.
- Evidence that clearly-stated, measurable goals and objectives guide the college community in making decisions regarding planning and allocation of resources as well as curriculum and program development.
- Written, current institutional plans that describe ways in which the institution will achieve its goals.
- Evidence that the processes used in planning and institutional improvement are communicated and that they provide the means by which the college community can participate in decision-making.
- Evidence that goals are developed with the knowledge and understanding of the college community.
- Evidence that there exists a current cycle in which evaluation results are utilized in integrating planning, resource allocation, implementation, and re-evaluation.

Standard I: Institutional Mission and Effectiveness

B: Improving Institutional Effectiveness (continued)

- ❑ Evidence that data is both quantitative and qualitative.
- ❑ Evidence that well-defined decision-making processes and authority serve to facilitate planning and institutional effectiveness.
- ❑ Evidence of periodic and systematic assessment of the effectiveness of all institutional services and processes.
- ❑ Evidence that the results are disseminated to and understood by the college community.
- ❑ Evidence that results of periodic and systematic assessment are utilized for improvement.
- ❑ Evidence of current, systematic program review and implementation of results.
- ❑ Evidence that program review processes are systematically evaluated.

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs, student support services, and library and learning support services that facilitate and demonstrate the achievement of stated student learning outcomes. The institution provides an environment that supports learning, enhances student understanding and appreciation of diversity, and encourages personal and civic responsibility as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

A. Instructional Programs

The institution offers high-quality instructional programs in recognized and emerging fields of study that culminate in identified student outcomes leading to degrees, certificates, employment, or transfer to other higher education institutions or programs consistent with its mission. Instructional programs are systematically assessed in order to assure currency, improve teaching and learning strategies, and achieve stated student learning outcomes. The provisions of this standard are broadly applicable to all instructional activities offered in the name of the institution.

1. The institution demonstrates that all instructional programs, regardless of location or means of delivery, address and meet the mission of the institution and uphold its integrity.

   ◇ Do all institutional offerings fit the stated mission of the institution?

   ◇ How does the institution ensure that its programs and services are high quality and appropriate to an institution of higher education?

   ◇ How does the institution choose the fields of study in which it offers programs? What are the student achievement outcomes of the institution's programs; i.e., to what extent do students complete degrees and certificates, gain employment, or transfer to four-year institutions? By what means are programs assessed for currency, teaching and learning strategies, and student learning outcomes?

   ◇ To what extent are programs current? How effective are teaching strategies in fostering student learning?

   a. The institution identifies and seeks to meet the varied educational needs of its students through programs consistent with their educational preparation and the diversity, demographics, and economy of its communities. The institution relies upon research and analysis to identify student learning needs and to assess progress toward achieving stated learning outcomes.

      ◇ What research is conducted to inform what student learning needs are?

      ◇ How is this information incorporated into program planning?

      ◇ What kind of research is being conducted to determine if students are achieving stated learning outcomes?

b. The institution utilizes delivery systems and modes of instruction compatible with the objectives of the curriculum and appropriate to the current and future needs of its students.[1]

- ◇ How does the institution determine that delivery of instruction fits the objectives and content of its courses?
- ◇ How are delivery methods evaluated for their effectiveness in meeting student needs?
- ◇ What dialogue is taking place about delivery systems and modes of instruction?
- ◇ How effectively are delivery systems and modes of instruction facilitating student learning?

c. The institution identifies student learning outcomes for courses programs, certificates, and degrees; assesses student achievement of those outcomes; and uses assessment results to make improvements.

- ◇ What student learning outcomes has the institution identified for its courses, its programs, its certificates, its degrees?
- ◇ How and by whom are student learning outcomes and strategies for attaining them created? How and by whom are student learning outcomes and program outcomes assessed? How are the results used for improvement?
- ◇ Are student learning outcomes verifiably at the collegiate level? What assessments are in place for measuring these outcomes? How effectively are the assessments working?
- ◇ What dialogues have occurred about using assessment results to guide improvements to courses, programs, etc.? What improvements have resulted?

2. The institution assures the quality and improvement of all instructional courses and programs offered in the name of the institution, including collegiate, developmental, and pre-collegiate courses and programs, continuing and community education, study abroad, short-term training courses and programs, programs for international students, and contract or other special programs, regardless of type of credit awarded, delivery mode, or location.[1, 2]

- ◇ By what criteria and processes does the institution decide to offer developmental, pre-collegiate, continuing and community education, study abroad, short-term training, international student, or contract education programs?
- ◇ Which of these (or other) categories of courses and programs does the institution offer?
- ◇ By what means does the institution ensure that all of its instructional courses and programs are of high quality? Are they all of high quality?

- ◇ What is the process for establishing and evaluating each type of course and program? How does the college determine the appropriate credit type, delivery mode, and location of its courses and programs?

- ◇ Is the quality of all instructional courses and programs offered in the name of the institution ensured? Does the institution use evaluation of courses and programs effectively for improvement?

a. The institution uses established procedures to design, identify learning out comes for, approve, administer, deliver, and evaluate courses and programs. The institution recognizes the central role of its faculty for establishing quality and improving instructional courses and programs.

   - ◇ What established policies and institutional processes guide the development and evaluation of courses and programs? What is the role of faculty?

   - ◇ Do these procedures lead to assessment of quality and improvement? Who is responsible for identifying appropriate student learning outcomes?

   - ◇ Are the right student learning outcomes establishedfor each course and program? How is this "fit" evaluated?

   - ◇ What processes exist to approve and administer courses and programs? Are the processes effective?

   - ◇ How are courses and programs evaluated? How often? What are the results of the evaluations?

   - ◇ What improvements to courses and programs have occurred as a result of evaluation? How does the institution assure that it relies on faculty discipline expertise for establishing the quality of its courses and programs?

b. The institution relies on faculty expertise and the assistance of advisory committees when appropriate to identify competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution regularly assesses student progress towards achieving those outcomes.

   - ◇ How are competency levels and measurable student learning outcomes determined? What is the role of faculty? What is the role of advisory committees?

   - ◇ How has the institution structured the relationship between student learning outcomes, competency levels for degrees, certificates, programs, and courses?

   - ◇ Do students have a clear path to achieving the student learning outcomes required of a course, program degree, certificate? How well does the institution achieve and evaluate the effectiveness of learning at each level?

c. High-quality instruction and appropriate breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning characterize all programs.

- ◇ How does the institution demonstrate the quality of its instruction? What eviednce exists all programs are characterized by the variables cited in this standard?
- ◇ What institutional dialogue has occurred to enhance understanding and agreement about the quality and level of its programs?
- ◇ What criteria does the college use in deciding on the breadth, depth, rigor, sequencing, time to completion, and synthesis of learning breadth of each program it offers?
- ◇ What role do faculty play in these decisions? How does the college use these qualities (breadth, depth, etc.) to determine that a program is collegiate or pre-collegiate level?

d. The institution uses delivery modes and teaching methodologies that reflect the diverse needs and learning styles of its students.

- ◇ What assessment of student learning styles has the college performed?
- ◇ How does the institution demonstrate that it is meeting the needs and learning styles of its students? What do faculty and staff know about learning needs and pedagogical approaches?
- ◇ Do courses include multiple ways of assessing student learning? How does the college determine what delivery modes are appropriate for its students?
- ◇ What teaching methodologies are commonly used? How are methodologies selected? Have faculty discussed the relationship between teaching methodologies and student performance? What efforts has the college made to match methodologies with particular needs of students, with leaning styles?
- ◇ Has the college investigated the effectiveness of its delivery modes? How effective are delivery modes and instructional methodologies that the college uses in producing learning?

e. The institution evaluates all courses and programs through an on-going systematic review of their relevance, appropriateness, achievement of learning outcomes, currency, and future needs and plans.

- ◇ How is the effectiveness of instructional courses and programs determined?
- ◇ Do criteria used in program review include relevancy, appropriateness, achievement of student learning outcomes, currency, planning for the future? Is this process consistently followed for all college programs, regardless of the type of program (collegiate, developmental, etc.)?

- ◇ What types of data are available for program evaluation? Does the evaluation include a curricular review? Does the evaluation include a comprehensive review of the role of the program in the overall college curriculum?

- ◇ How is the relevancy of a program determined? Have student learning out comes for the program been identified? How well are student achieving these outcomes?

- ◇ How are results of program evaluation used in institutional planning? What changes/improvements in programs have occurred as a result of the consideration of program evaluations?

f. The institution engages in ongoing, systematic evaluation and integrated planning to assure currency and measure achievement of its stated student learning outcomes for courses, certificates, programs including general and vocational education, and degrees. The institution systematically strives to improve those outcomes and makes the results available to appropriate constituencies.

- ◇ To what extent does the institution understand and embrace the notion of ongoing planning?

- ◇ Does the college have a planning process in place? Is it cyclical, i.e., does it incorporate systematic evaluation of programs and services, improvement planning, implementation, and re-evaluation? How college budgeting of resources follow planning?

- ◇ To what extent are institutional data available and used for planning? Are data analyzed and interpreted for easy understanding by the college community?

g. If an institution uses departmental course and/or program examinations, it validates their effectiveness in measuring student learning and minimizes test biases

- ◇ Does the institution use stated learning outcomes to determine credited awarded for credit?

h. The institution awards credit based on student achievement of the course's stated learning outcomes. Units of credit awarded are consistent with institutional policies that reflect generally accepted norms or equivalencies in higher education.

- ◇ Are student learning outcomes the basis for credit awarded for courses? Are credits awarded consistent with accepted norms in higher education?

i. The institution awards degrees and certificates based on student achievement of a program's stated learning outcomes.

- ◇ By what mean does the institution ensure that achievement of stated learning outcomes are the basis for awarding degrees and certificates?

- ◇ What institutional dialogue has occurred about thelearning expected of students in order for them to earn a degree or certificate?

- ◇ How has the college identified student learning outcomes for its degrees and c ertificates?

3. The institution requires of all academic and vocational degree programs a component of general education based on a carefully considered philosophy that is clearly stated in its catalog. The institution, relying on the expertise of its faculty, determines the appropriateness of each course for inclusion in the general education curriculum by examining the stated learning outcomes for the course.

   - ◇ What evidence is found in the catalogue of a faculty-developed rationale for general education that serves as the basis for inclusion of courses in general education?

   - ◇ How are student learning outcomes used to analyze courses for inclusion as general education?

   - ◇ How is the rationale for general education communicated to all stakeholders?

   - ◇ How is the general education philosophy reflected in the degree requirements?

   General education has comprehensive learning outcomes for the students who complete it, including the following:

   a. An understanding of the basic content and methodology of the major areas of knowledge: areas include the humanities and fine arts, the natural sciences, and the social sciences

      - ◇ How are the basic content and methodology of traditional areas of knowledge in general education determined?

      - ◇ What process is used to ensure that general education courses include this content and methodology?

      - ◇ Do general education courses demonstrate student achievement of comprehensive student learning outcomes?

      - ◇ Do student learning outcomes for general education courses require students to understand the basic content and methodology in the major areas of knowledge? Is there a consistent process for assuring that the content and methodology are included in course outlines?

      - ◇ How well are students able to apply their understanding to subsequent coursework, employment, or other endeavors?

b. A capability to be a productive individual and life long learner: skills include oral and written communication, information competency, computer literacy, scientific and quantitative reasoning, critical analysis/logical thinking, and the ability to acquire knowledge through a variety of means.

- What standards have been developed to determine if general education students have attained these goals?
- What criteria does the college use to assure that the required skill level meets collegiate standards? Is there a consistent process for assuring that expected skill levels are included in course outlines? What measures of student skill are employed? Is the college satisfied that these measures are effective?
- How well are students achieving these outcomes? How well are students able to apply these skills to subsequent coursework, employment, or other endeavors?

c. A recognition of what it means to be an ethical human being and effective citizen: qualities include an appreciation of ethical principles; civility and interpersonal skills; respect for cultural diversity; historical and aesthetic sensitivity; and the willingness to assume civic, political, and social responsibilities locally, nationally, and globally.

- How are student learning outcomes developed to address concerns about ethics and effective citizenship? How is it determined where to include student learning leading to development of these qualities?

4. All degree programs include focused study in at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.

- Do degree programs include at least one area of focused study or interdisciplinary core?

5. Students completing vocational and occupational certificates and degrees demonstrate technical and professional competencies that meet employment and other applicable standards and are prepared for external licensure and certification

- What evidence exists that students who complete vocational and occupational degrees and certificates meet employment competencies? Are prepared for licensure? Are prepared for certification by external agencies?
- How does the college acquire information about its students' ability to meet these requirements? Is this information reliable?

6. The institution assures that students and prospective students receive clear and accurate information about educational courses and programs and transfer policies. The institution describes its degrees and certificates in terms of their purpose, content, course requirements, and expected student learning outcomes. In every class section students receive a course syllabus that specifies learning objectives consistent with those in the institution's officially approved course outline.

   - How does the institution assure that information about its programs is clear and accurate? Are degrees and certificates clearly described? Are student learning outcomes included in descriptions of courses and programs?

   - How does the institution verify that students receive a course syllabus that includes student learning outcomes?

   - How does the college verify that individual sections of courses adhere to the course learning objectives?

   a. The institution makes available to its students clearly stated transfer-of-credit policies in order to facilitate the mobility of students without penalty. In accepting transfer credits to fulfill degree requirements, the institution certifies that the expected learning outcomes for transferred courses are comparable to the learning outcomes of its own courses. Where patterns of student enrollment between institutions are identified, the institution develops articulation agreements as appropriate to its mission.

      - What policies does the institution have to address transfer of coursework in and out of the institution and how are they communicated to students? Are these policies regularly reviewed?

      - How does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate articulation agreements?

   b. When programs are eliminated or program requirements are significantly changed, the institution makes appropriate arrangements so that enrolled students may complete their education in a timely manner with a minimum of disruption.[3]

      - What policy does the institution have to address elimination of or major changes in programs?

      - Are students advised on how to complete educational requirements when programs are eliminated or modified?

c. The institution represents itself clearly, accurately, and consistently to prospective and current students, the public, and its personnel through its catalogs, statements, and publications, including those presented in electronic formats. It regularly reviews institutional policies, procedures, and publications to assure integrity in all representations about its mission, programs, and services.

- How does the institution conduct regular reviews of its policies and practices regarding publications to ensure their integrity? Are electronic representations of the institution regularly reviewed?

- Does the institution provide information on student achievement to the public? Is that information accurate? Current?

7. In order to assure the academic integrity of the teaching-learning process, the institution uses and makes public governing board-adopted policies on academic freedom and responsibility, student academic honesty, and specific institutional beliefs or worldviews. These policies make clear the institution's commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge.

- Are Board- approved policies on academic freedom made public? Are Board approved policies on student academic honesty made public?

a. Faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline. They present data and information fairly and objectively.

- What policies demonstrate institutional commitment to freepursuit and dissemination of knowledge?

- How does the college communicate its expectation that faculty distinguish between personal conviction and professionally accepted views in a discipline? In what discussions have faculty engaged to deepen understanding of this expectation? How successfully do faculty make this distinction in the classroom? What mechanisms does the college have for determining how effectively it is meeting this expectation?

b. The institution establishes and publishes clear expectations concerning student academic honesty and consequences for dishonesty.

- What mechanism does the institution have for informing students and faculty about, and enforcing, its policies on academic honesty?

c. Institutions that require conformity to specific codes of conduct of staff, faculty, administrators, or students, or that seek to instill specific beliefs or worldviews, give clear prior notice of such policies, including statements in the catalog and/or appropriate faculty or student handbooks.

- ◇ How are requirements of conformity to codes of conduct communicated?
- ◇ If a college seeks to instill specific beliefs or worldviews, what policies does it have in place to detail these goals? How are the policies communicated to appropriate constituencies?
- ◇ Are Board- approved policies on academic freedom made public? Are Board approved policies on student academic honesty made public?

8. Institutions offering curricula in foreign locations to students other than U.S. nationals operate in conformity with standards and applicable Commission policies.[2]

- ◇ How well do curricula offered in foreign locations to non-U.S. students conform to the specifications of Commission policy Principles of Good Practice in Overseas International Education Programs for Non-U.S. Nationals?

B. Student Support Services

The institution recruits and admits diverse students who are able to benefit from its programs, consistent with its mission. Student support services address the identified needs of students and enhance a supportive learning environment. The entire student pathway through the institutional experience is characterized by a concern for student access, progress, learning, and success. The institution systematically assesses student support services using student learning outcomes, faculty and staff input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of these services.

- ◇ How does the institution determine that admitted students are able to benefit from its programs? How is this information applied to admissions policies and procedures?
- ◇ What college-wide discussions have occurred about how student access, progress, learning, and success are consistently supported?

1. The institution assures the quality of student support services and demonstrates that these services, regardless of location or means of delivery, support student learning and enhance achievement of the mission of the institution.[1, 2]

- ◇ By what means does the institution assure the quality of its student support services? How does the institution demonstrate that these services support student learning?

2. The institution provides a catalog for its constituencies with precise, accurate, and current information concerning the following:

a. General Information

Official Name, Address(es), Telephone Number(s), and Web Site Address of the Institution

- Educational Mission
- Course, Program, and Degree Offerings
- Academic Calendar and Program Length
- Academic Freedom Statement
- Available Student Financial Aid
- Available Learning Resources
- Names and Degrees of Administrators and Faculty
- Names of Governing Board Members

b. Requirements

- Admissions
- Student Fees and Other Financial Obligations
- Degree, Certificates, Graduation and Transfer

c. Major Policies Affecting Students

- Academic Regulations, including Academic Honesty
- Nondiscrimination
- Acceptance of Transfer Credits
- Grievance and Complaint Procedures
- Sexual Harassment
- Refund of Fees

d. Locations or Publications Where Other Policies May be Found

◇ Is the catalogue current, clear, easy to understand, easy to use, well-structured?

◇ How is the catalog reviewed for accuracy and currency? What process does the college use to ensure that the information in its publications is easily accessible to students, prospective students, and the public? Is the catalog complete?

◇ When policies are not included in the catalog are the publications in which they are found easily accessible?

3. The institution researches and identifies the learning support needs of its student population and provides appropriate services and programs to address those needs.

   ◇ By what means does the institution determine the support needs of its students? How well does it address these needs?

   a. The institution assures equitable access to all of its students by providing appropriate, comprehensive, and reliable services to students regardless of service location or delivery method.[1]

      ◇ What evidence is provided that the institution assesses student needs for services regardless of location and provides for them?

      ◇ How are on-line services and services at off-site locations evaluated? How well are services meeting the needs of students?

   b. The institution provides an environment that encourages personal and civic responsibility, as well as intellectual, aesthetic, and personal development for all of its students.

      ◇ What is the institution doing to provide a learning environment that promotes these personal attributes? In what dialogues has the institution engaged about what constitutes a good learning environment?

      ◇ What programs or services has the institution determined contribute to this environment? What areas have been identified for improvement? How does the college evaluate its efforts in this area? How are the results of the evaluations used to improve the environment?

   c. The institution designs, maintains, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising programs to support student development and success and prepares faculty and other personnel responsible for the advising function.

      ◇ Does the institution develop, implement, and evaluate counseling and/or academic advising?

      ◇ Does the evaluation of counseling and/or academic advising include how it enhances student development and success?

      ◇ Are those responsible for counseling/advising trained?

   d. The institution designs and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support and enhance student understanding and appreciation of diversity.

      ◇ What does the institution do to promote student understanding and appreciation of diversity? What measures does the institution use to determine their effectiveness? How well are these efforts working?

e. The institution regularly evaluates admissions and placement instruments and practices to validate their effectiveness while minimizing biases.

- What processes are used to evaluate the effectiveness ofpractices and tools of admissions? What evaluations of placement processes are used to ensure their consistency and effectiveness? How are cultural and linguistic bias in the instruments and processes minimized?

f. The institution maintains student records permanently, securely, and confidentially, with provision for secure backup of all files, regardless of the form in which those files are maintained. The institution publishes and follows established policies for release of student records.

- What institutional policies govern the maintenance of student records? Are records secure? Does the institution have a policy for release of student records?

4. The institution evaluates student support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

- How does the institution provide for systematic and regular review of its student support services? How are the results used?

- Does the evaluation assess how student support services contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes? How are evaluation results used to improve services?

C. Library and Learning Support Services

Library and other learning support services for students are sufficient to support the institution's instructional programs and intellectual, aesthetic, and cultural activities in whatever format and wherever they are offered. Such services include library services and collections, tutoring, learning centers, computer laboratories, and learning technology development and training. The institution provides access and training to students so that library and other learning support services may be used effectively and efficiently. The institution systematically assesses these services using student learning outcomes, faculty input, and other appropriate measures in order to improve the effectiveness of the services.

1. The institution supports the quality of its instructional programs by providing library and other learning support services that are sufficient in quantity, currency, depth, and variety to facilitate educational offerings, regardless of location or means of delivery.[1]

   a. Relying on appropriate expertise of faculty, including librarians and other learning support services professionals, the institution selects and maintains educational equipment and materials to support student learning and enhance the achievement of the mission of the institution.

      ◇ What information about student learning needs is provided by other instructional faculty and staff to inform selection of library resources?

      ◇ How does the institution assess the effectiveness of its own library collection in terms of quantity, quality, depth and variety? What quantity is sufficient to meet student learning needs?

      ◇ What is the quality determined as necessary by the institution?

      ◇ How does the institution know it has sufficient depth and variety of materials to meet the learning needs of its students?

      ◇ What information does the library use to determine whether it is enhancing student achievement of identified learning outcomes?

   b. The institution provides ongoing instruction for users of library and other learning support services so that students are able to develop skills in information competency.

      ◇ What are the information competencies that the institution purports to teach all students? What is the evidence that the institution acts purposefully to teach these competencies?

      ◇ How does the institution assess the competencies in information retrieval/use that it teaches students? How does the institution evaluate its teaching effectiveness and set goals for improvement?

c. The institution provides students and personnel responsible for student learning programs and services adequate access to the library and other learning support services, regardless of their location or means of delivery. 1

- ◇ What are the hours of operation of the library?
- ◇ What is the availability of electronic access to library materials?
- ◇ Are all campus locations/all types of students/all college instructional programs equally supported by library services and accessibility?

d. The institution provides effective maintenance and security for its library and other learning support services.

e. When the institution relies on or collaborates with other institutions or other sources for library and other learning support services for its instructional programs, it documents that formal agreements exist and that such resources and services are adequate for the institution's intended purposes, are easily accessible, and utilized. The performance of these services is evaluated on a regular basis. The institution takes responsibility for and assures the reliability of all services provided either directly or through contractual arrangement.

- ◇ What contracts, if any, exist for the provision of library and learning support services? What processes does the institution have for evaluating and ensuring the quality of those contracted services? How does the institution gather information to assess whether the services are being used?

2. The institution evaluates library and other learning support services to assure their adequacy in meeting identified student needs. Evaluation of these services provides evidence that they contribute to the achievement of student learning outcomes. The institution uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

- ◇ What methods does the institution use to evaluate its library and other learning support services? Does the evaluation assess use, access, and relationship of the services to intended student learning? Does the evaluation include input by faculty, staff and students?

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard II

Listed below are examples of sources of evidence for Standard II:

Standard II: Student Learning Programs and Services

A. Instructional Programs

- ❑ Evidence that all instructional offerings are in keeping with the institution's mission regardless of where and how they are taught.
- ❑ Evidence that the quality of all programs is consistently determined to meet a high standard.
- ❑ Evidence of analytical reviews demonstrating that instructional programs are relevant to the interest, needs, goals, and aspirations of the students served by the institution.
- ❑ Evidence that students are achieving stated learning outcomes.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution considers how instruction is delivered and how it assesses that delivery is both appropriate and current.
- ❑ Evidence of the development of student learning outcomes and strategies for attaining those outcomes at the course, program, certificate and degree level.
- ❑ Evidence of assessment of student learning and program outcomes.
- ❑ Evidence of review of assessment results and utilization for improvement of student learning.
- ❑ Evidence that an institutional process exists for determining the quality of all courses and programs.
- ❑ Evidence that established procedures are used to develop courses and programs and that faculty play a major role in this endeavor.
- ❑ Evidence for a faculty-driven assessment plan that includes systematic evaluation and integrated planning of student learning outcomes for all courses, certificates, programs, and degrees.
- ❑ Evidence that systematic evaluation and review of student progress toward achieving learning outcomes take place.
- ❑ Evidence of the role played by advisory committees.
- ❑ Evidence that instructional offerings are in appropriate areas of academic study given the institution's mission.
- ❑ Evidence that programs are appropriately sequenced to provide the bases for subsequent courses.

- ❑ Evidence that courses are of sufficient content, breadth, and length to permit the student to learn and practice expected knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution concerns itself with pedagogy that addresses student needs and learning styles.
- ❑ Evidence that diverse methods of instruction are used and that students are exposed to a variety of points of view.
- ❑ Evidence of regular, systematic evaluation and review of instructional courses and programs, using consistent and valid research strategies.
- ❑ Evidence that evaluation results are used for improvement.
- ❑ Evidence that elements assessed include measures of student learning.
- ❑ Evidence for an assessment plan that includes systematic evaluation and integrated planning of student learning outcomes for all courses, certificates, programs, and degrees.
- ❑ Evidence that results of evaluation are disseminated.
- ❑ Evidence that results of evaluation are used for improvement.
- ❑ Evidence of a process for validating the effectiveness of examinations in assessing student learning.
- ❑ Evidence that placement tests are examined for biases.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution has developed a means for awarding credit based on student learning outcomes.
- ❑ Evidence that credits awarded are consistent with accepted higher education practices.
- ❑ Evidence that the college uses student achievement of stated learning outcomes in awarding credit for degrees and certificates.
- ❑ Evidence that a consistent process for examining student learning outcomes is used to analyze courses for inclusion as general education.
- ❑ Evidence that the rationale for general education is communicated to students, employers, and other constituencies.
- ❑ Evidence that content and methodology is determined by appropriate discipline faculty.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution has determined standards for the skills in general education.

- ❑ Evidence that students who complete general education programs are proficient these skills.
- ❑ Evidence that the program of general education includes student learning outcomes concerning values, ethics, civic responsibility, and diverse perspectives.
- ❑ Evidence that all degree programs include at least one area of inquiry or in an established interdisciplinary core.
- ❑ Evidence that students who complete vocational and occupational degrees and certificates meet employment competencies, are prepared for certification by external agencies, are prepared for licensure.
- ❑ Evidence that clear and complete information about degrees and certificates is made available to students in publications and course syllabi.
- ❑ Evidence that transfer policies are made available to students.
- ❑ Evidence that transferred courses accepted are comparable to the college's student learning outcomes for courses.
- ❑ Evidence that articulation agreements exist and are regularly evaluated.
- ❑ Evidence that students are able to complete programs that undergo change or are eliminated.
- ❑ Evidence that students are advised on what they must do to complete such programs.
- ❑ Evidence that publications and other representations of the college are regularly reviewed for clarity and accuracy.
- ❑ Evidence that institutional policies are regularly reviewed to ensure integrity.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution provides the public with information about student achievement.
- ❑ Evidence of board-approved and distributed policies on academic freedom and student academic honesty.
- ❑ Evidence that these policies are followed.
- ❑ Evidence of faculty awareness and commitment to fair and objective presentation of knowledge.
- ❑ Evidence that a colleges espousing specific world views or codes of conduct make policies clear in publications provided in advance of enrollment or employment.

B. Student Support Services

- ❑ Evidence that the institution systematically evaluates its student support services in light of its stated mission.
- ❑ Evidence that student support services support learning.
- ❑ Evidence that the catalog contains items specified in Standards IIB.2.a, IIB.2.b and IIB.2.c, IIB.2.d.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution assesses student needs for services and provides for them.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution assesses student needs for services regardless of location and provides them.
- ❑ Evidence that activities encouraging personal development are made available to students.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution develops, implements, and evaluates counseling and/or academic advising.
- ❑ Evidence that evaluation of counseling and/or academic advising includes how it enhances student development and success.
- ❑ Evidence that those responsible for counseling/advising are trained.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution develops, implements, and evaluates the effectiveness of services in enhancing student understanding and appreciation of diversity.
- ❑ Evidence that admissions practices and placement instruments are regularly evaluated.
- ❑ Evidence that placement instruments are valid and minimize bias.
- ❑ Evidence that student records are kept confidential and secure.
- ❑ Evidence for how student records are released.
- ❑ Evidence that review of student service programs is regularly conducted and that the results are used for improvement.
- ❑ Evidence that analysis of review of student service programs includes verification that services contribute to student learning outcomes.

C. Library and Learning Support Services

- ❑ Evidence that includes the evaluation instruments, their analysis, conclusions and plans for improvement of the library and learning support services, evidence that improvements are planned and implemented.

- ❑ Evidence that shows quantity, quality, depth and variety:

  - *Description of quantity:* Number of volumes, number of periodicals, description of number and kinds of technological resources or equipment, including computers, microfiche machines, video equipment, audio tapes, CD ROM's and other data source, number of "seats" available in Library and LRC.

- ❑ Evidence that shows ongoing instruction:

  - List of courses, workshops and other training held each academic year and attendance.

  - Course or workshop outlines, materials used in training, including identified learning outcomes.

- ❑ Evidence that the library evaluates the effectiveness of student learning during courses, workshops on information competency and use of the LLSS.

- ❑ Evidence that data linking purchases to educational programs and SLO's defined by educational programs and by assessments of student learning.

- ❑ A description of library acquisition plans related to educational plans.

  - Data and analyses of the institutional evaluations of library holdings by faculty (or disciplines or programs), students, and any external reviewers.

  - Other analyses showing relationship between library use and student learning.

- ❑ Evidence that includes a description of hours of operation or access, description of remote access to Library and LRC holdings, capacity of the remote means of delivery, any contingencies on turn around time, limits to access relative to on-campus students.

- ❑ Evidence that holdings are related to educational programs and that all educational program needs have adequate materials in the library.

- ❑ Evidence that there is access to Library and LSS for remote students/staff institutional policies on remote access, including personnel policies that describe access provided to educational staff.

  - Description of remote access practice—computer based, circulation of volumes, etc. for each remote site or population.

  - Description of use of Library and LSS by remote uses – students, faculty.

- ❑ Evidence that includes istitutional maintenance schedules, capital improvement plans. Description of security provisions for library holdings. Any institutional self-assessments of adequacy of same.

  • Institutional plans for improvement of L and LSS.

- ❑ Evidence that includes the formal agreements or contracts themselves, and evidence therein of the accredited institution's expectations for services.

  • Description of the contracted/collaborated services quantity, quality, depth and currency, as in a, b, c and d, above.

  • Results of evaluation of the contracted/collaborated L and LSS.

  • Provisions of the contract that provide for accredited institution's control of quality or ability to influence quality of contracted/collaborated service.

Standard III: Resources

The institution effectively uses its human, physical, technology, and financial resources to achieve its broad educational purposes, including stated student learning outcomes, and to improve institutional effectiveness.

A. Human Resources

The institution employs qualified personnel to support student learning programs and services wherever offered and by whatever means delivered, and to improve institutional effectiveness. Personnel are treated equitably, are evaluated regularly and systematically, and are provided opportunities for professional development. Consistent with its mission, the institution demonstrates its commitment to the significant educational role played by persons of diverse backgrounds by making positive efforts to encourage such diversity. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

1. The institution assures the integrity and quality of its programs and services by employing personnel who are qualified by appropriate education, training, and experience to provide and support these programs and services.

   ◇ What methods does the institution use to assure that qualifications for each position are closely matched to specific programmatic needs? What analyses and discussions have led the institution to agree on those needs?

   ◇ Upon what discussion and information does the institution decide on hiring priorities?

   ◇ Are the institution's personnel sufficiently qualified to guarantee the integrity of programs and services?

   a. Criteria, qualifications, and procedures for selection of personnel are clearly and publicly stated. Job descriptions are directly related to institutional mission and goals and accurately reflect position duties, responsibilities, and authority. Criteria for selection of faculty include knowledge of the subject matter or service to be performed (as determined by individuals with discipline expertise), effective teaching, scholarly, and potential to contribute to the mission of the institution. Institutional faculty play a significant role in selection of new faculty. Degrees held by faculty and administrators are from institutions accredited by recognized U.S. accrediting agencies. Degrees from non-U.S. institutions are recognized only if equivalence has been established.[4]

      ◇ How does the institution decide on hiring criteria?

      ◇ How are faculty involved in the selection of new faculty?

      ◇ How does the college decide an applicant is well qualified?

      ◇ How does the college know that faculty who are selected have a knowledge of their subject matter?

- By what methods does the college define and evaluate "effective teaching" in its hiring processes? How is that effectiveness judged?

- How does the college define and judge scholarship in a candidate, and by what means does it judge a candidate's potential to contribute to a college mission?

- How are jobs advertised?

- By what means does the institution verify the qualifications of applicants and newly hired personnel?

- How does the college check the equivalency of degrees from non-U.S. institutions?

- What evidence is there that hiring processes yield highly qualified employees?

- What safeguards are in place to assure that hiring procedures are constantly applied?

b. The institution assures the effectiveness of its human resources by evaluating all personnel systematically and at stated intervals. The institution establishes written criteria for evaluating all personnel, including performance of assigned duties and participation in institutional responsibilities and other activities appropriate to their expertise. Evaluation processes seek to assess effectiveness of personnel and encourage improvement. Actions taken following evaluations are formal, timely, and documented.

- How does the college decide on appropriate institutional responsibilities for personnel participation? How is participation judged?

- How does the college determine the appropriateness of activities to personnel expertise?

- What process is in place to assure that evaluations lead to improvement of job performance?

- What is the connection between personnel evaluations and institutional effectiveness and improvement?

- Do evaluation criteria measure the effectiveness of personnel in performing their duties?

c. Faculty and others directly responsible for student progress toward achieving stated student learning outcomes have, as a component of their evaluation, effectiveness in producing those learning outcomes.

- ◇ What are the roles of teachers, tutors, and others in producing student learning outcomes?
- ◇ What deep thinking have faculty, as individuals and collectively, engaged in about how well students are learning in their courses and programs? What measures have they, again as individuals and collectively, created or selected to measure that learning?
- ◇ What discussions have faculty had about how to improve learning? What plans have been made?
- ◇ What changes have faculty made in their methodologies to improve learning?
- ◇ What changes in course content or sequencing have resulted from analyses of how well students are mastering course content?
- ◇ What methods has the institution developed to evaluate effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes? Are these methods yielding meaningful and useful results?
- ◇ How does the institution use evaluation results to improve student learning outcomes?

d. The institution upholds a written code of professional ethics for all of its personnel.

- ◇ How does the institution foster ethical behavior in its employees?

2. The institution maintains a sufficient number of qualified faculty with full-time responsibility to the institution. The institution has a sufficient number of staff and administrators with appropriate preparation and experience to provide the administrative services necessary to support the institution's mission and purposes.

- ◇ By what means does the institution determine appropriate staffing levels for each program and service?
- ◇ How does the institution decide on the organization of administrative and support staffing?
- ◇ How effectively does the number and organization of the institution's personnel work to support its programs and services? How does the institution evaluate this effectiveness?

3. The institution systematically develops personnel policies and procedures that are available for information and review. Such policies and procedures are equitably and consistently administered.

   ◇ What processes does the institution use to develop and publicize its personnel policies?

   ◇ How does the institution ensure that it administers its personnel policies consistently? Do these policies and processes result in fair treatment of personnel?

   a. The institution establishes and adheres to written policies ensuring fairness in all employment procedures.

   b. The institution makes provision for the security and confidentiality of personnel records. Each employee has access to his/her personnel records in accordance with law.

      ◇ What are the institution's provisions for keeping personnel records?

      ◇ How does the institution provide employees access to their records?

      ◇ How effectively does institution maintain personnel records?

4. The institution demonstrates through policies and practices an appropriate understanding of and concern for issues of equity and diversity.

   ◇ In what ways does the institution foster an appreciation for diversity?

   ◇ How effective are the institution's policies and practices in promoting understanding of equity and diversity issues? How does the institution know these policies and practices are effective?

   a. The institution creates and maintains appropriate programs, practices, and services that support its diverse personnel.

      ◇ How does the college determine what kinds of support its personnel need?

      ◇ How does the institution design programs and services that provide for the range of personnel at the institution?

      ◇ What programs and services does the institution have to support its personnel? How effective are these programs?

   b. The institution regularly assesses its record in employment equity and diversity consistent with its mission.

      ◇ What is the institution's record on employment equity and diversity?

      ◇ How does the institution track and analyze its employment equity record? How does it use this information?

c. The institution subscribes to, advocates, and demonstrates integrity in the treatment of its administration, faculty, staff and students.

- ◇ What policies and procedures about the treatment of personnel does the institution have in place?
- ◇ How does the institution ensure that its personnel and students are treated fairly?

5. The institution provides all personnel with appropriate opportunities for continued professional development, consistent with the institutional mission and based on identified teaching and learning needs.

a. The institution plans professional development activities to meet the needs of its personnel.

b. With the assistance of the participants, the institution systematically evaluates professional development programs and uses the results of these evaluations as the basis for improvement.

- ◇ What professional development programs does the institution support?
- ◇ How does the institution identify teaching and learning needs of its faculty and other personnel?
- ◇ What processes ensure that professional development opportunities address those needs?
- ◇ How does the college ensure meaningful evaluation of professional development activities?
- ◇ What impact do professional development activities have on the improvement of teaching and learning? How does the institution evaluate that improvement?

6. Human resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of human resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

- ◇ By what process does the institution assess the use of its human resources?
- ◇ How does the institution ensure that human resource decisions emanate from institutional needs and plans for improvement? Specifically, what evidence is there that the institution bases its human resource decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs?
- ◇ How does the institution determine that human resource needs in program and service areas are met effectively? How effectively are those needs met?

B. Physical Resources

Physical resources, which include facilities, equipment, land, and other assets, support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness. Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning.

1. The institution provides safe and sufficient physical resources that support and assure the integrity and quality of its programs and services, regardless of location or means of delivery.

   - Against what criteria and by what processes does the institution evaluate the safety of its facilities?
   - Upon what data has the institution determined the sufficiency of its class rooms, lecture halls, laboratories, and other facilities? What mechanisms does the college employ to evaluate how effectively facilities meet the needs of programs and services?
   - How well does the institution meet its facilities needs?Does the institution use the same criteria and processes for determining safety and sufficiency of facilities at off-campus sites? To what extent are off-campus sites safe and sufficient?
   - How does the college use the results of facilities evaluations to improve them? Does the college employ similar processes to assure the safety and sufficiency of its equipment?
   - How does the institution support the equipment needs of the distance delivery modes it offers? Are institutional needs for equipment met?

a. The institution plans, builds, maintains, and upgrades or replaces its physical resources in a manner that assures effective utilization and the continuing quality necessary to support its programs and services.

   - How does the institution consider the needs of programs and services when planning its buildings?
   - What processes ensure that program and service needs determine equipment replacement and maintenance?
   - How does the institution evaluate effectiveness of facilities and equipment in meeting the needs of programs and services?
   - How effectively does the institution use its physical resources?

b. The institution assures that physical resources at all locations where it offers courses, programs, and services are constructed and maintained to assure access, safety, security, and a healthful learning and working environment.

- ◇ How does the institution assure access to its facilities?
- ◇ How does the institution ensure that it maintains sufficient control over off-site facilities to ensure their quality?

2. To assure the feasibility and effectiveness of physical resources in supporting institutional programs and services, the institution plans and evaluates its facilities and equipment on a regular basis, taking utilization and other relevant data into account.

- ◇ By what process does the institution assess the use of its facilities? How often does evaluation occur?
- ◇ How does the college use the results of the evaluation to improve facilities or equipment?

a. Long-range capital plans support institutional improvement goals and reflect projections of the total cost of ownership of new facilities and equipment.

- ◇ What process does the institution follow to make capital plans? How does institutional planning determine long-range capital projects?
- ◇ What elements comprise the definition of "total cost of ownership" the institution uses when making decisions about facilities and equipment?
- ◇ How do planning processes ensure that capital projects support college goals? How effectively is long-range capital planning helping to college achieve improvement goals?

b. Physical resource planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of physical resources and uses the results of the evaluation as the basis for improvement.

- ◇ How does the institution ensure that facilities decisions emanate from institutional needs and plans for improvement?
- ◇ What evidence is there that the institution bases its physical resource decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs? How does the institution prioritize needs when making decisions about equipment purchases?
- ◇ How does the institution determine that physical resource needs in program and service areas are met effectively? How effectively are those needs met?

C. Technology Resources

Technology resources are used to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning.

1. The institution assures that any technology support it provides is designed to meet the needs of learning, teaching, college-wide communications, research, and operational systems.

   ◇ How does the institution make sure that its various types of technology needs are identified?

   ◇ If the college is not supported by technology, how did the college make that decision?

   ◇ How does how the institution evaluate the effectiveness of its technology in meeting its range of needs? How effectively are those needs met?

   a. Technology services, professional support, facilities, hardware, and software are designed to enhance the operation and effectiveness of the institution.

      ◇ How does the institution make decisions about technology services, facilities, hardware, and software?

      ◇ How well does technology accommodate the college's curricular commitments for distance learning programs and courses? Whether technology is provided directly by the institution or through contractual arrangements, are there provisions for reliability, disaster recovery, privacy, and security?

   b. The institution provides quality training in the effective application of its information technology to students and personnel.

      ◇ How does the institution assess the need for information technology training for students and personnel?

      ◇ What technology training does the institution provide to students and personnel? How does the institution ensure that the training and technical support it provides for faculty and staff are appropriate and effective? How effective is the training provided?

   c. The institution systematically plans, acquires, maintains, and upgrades or replaces technology infrastructure and equipment to meet institutional needs.

      ◇ How has the institution provided for the management, maintenance, and operation of its technological infrastructure and equipment?

      ◇ Does the college provide appropriate system reliability and emergency backup?

d. The distribution and utilization of technology resources support the development, maintenance, and enhancement of its programs and services.

- ◇ How does the institution make decisions about use and distribution of its technology resources?
- ◇ What provisions has the institution made to assure a robust and secure technical infrastructure, providing maximum reliability for students and faculty?
- ◇ What policies or procedures does the institution have in place to keep the infrastructure reasonably up-to-date?
- ◇ Does the institution give sufficient consideration to equipment selected for distance programs? How effectively is technology distributed and used?

2. Technology planning is integrated with institutional planning. The institution systematically assesses the effective use of technology resources and uses the results of evaluation as the basis for improvement.

- ◇ How does the institution ensure that facilities decisions emanate from institutional needs and plans for improvement?
- ◇ What evidence is there that the institution bases its technology decisions on the results of evaluation of program and service needs?
- ◇ How does the institution determine that technology needs in program and service areas are met effectively?
- ◇ How does the institution prioritize needs when making decisions about technology purchases? How effectively are those needs met?

D. Financial Resources

Financial resources are sufficient to support student learning programs and services and to improve institutional effectiveness. The distribution of resources supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of programs and services. The institution plans and manages its financial affairs with integrity and in a manner that ensures financial stability. The level of financial resources provides a reasonable expectation of both short-term and long-term financial solvency. Financial resources planning is integrated with institutional planning.

- ◇ What is the institution's overall budget?
- ◇ Does it have sufficient revenues to support educational improvements?
- ◇ Does the resource allocation process provide a means for setting priorities for funding institutional improvements?

1. The institution relies upon its mission and goals as the foundation for financial planning.

   a. Financial planning is integrated with and supports all institutional planning.

      ◇ Does the institution review its mission and goals as part of the annual fiscal planning process?

      ◇ Does the institution identify goals for achievement in any given budget cycle?

      ◇ Does the institution establish priorities among competing needs so that it can predict future funding? Do institutional plans exist, and are they linked clearly to financial plans, both short term and long range?

      ◇ Does the financial planning process rely primarily on institutional plans for content and timelines?

      ◇ Can the institution provide evidence that past fiscal expenditures have supported achievement of institutional plans?

      ◇ Does the Board or other institutional leadership receive information about fiscal planning that demonstrates its links to institutional planning?

   b. Institutional planning reflects realistic assessment of financial resource availability, development of financial resources, partnerships, and expenditure requirements.

      ◇ Do individuals involved in institutional planning receive accurate information about available funds, including the annual budget showing ongoing and anticipated fiscal commitments?

      ◇ Does the institution establish funding priorities in some fashion that helps the institution achieve its goals in reasonable fashion? Are items focused on student learning given appropriate priority? What other documents describing funding priorities are used by institutional planners?

   c. When making short-range financial plans, the institution considers its long-range financial priorities to assure financial stability. The institution clearly identifies and plans for payment of liabilities and future obligations.

      ◇ What evidence of long term fiscal planning and priorities exits?

      ◇ Has the institution plans for payments of long term liabilities and obligations, including debt, health benefits, insurance costs, building maintenance costs, etc? Is this information used in short term or annual budget and other fiscal planning?

   d. The institution clearly defines and follows its guidelines and processes for financial planning and budget

      ◇ Where or how are the processes for financial planning and budget recorded and made known to college constituents?

2. To assure the financial integrity of the institution and responsible use of financial resources, the financial management system has appropriate control mechanisms and widely disseminates dependable and timely information for sound financial decision making.

   a. Financial documents, including the budget and independent audit, reflect appropriate allocation and use of financial resources to support student learning programs and services. Institutional responses to external audit findings are comprehensive, timely, and communicated appropriately.

      ◇ Are funds allocated, as shown in the budget, in a manner that will realistically achieve the institution's stated goals for student learning?

      ◇ What do the audit statements say about financial management?

      ◇ Does the institution provide timely corrections to audit exceptions and management advice?

   b. Appropriate financial information is provided throughout the institution.

      ◇ What information about budget, about fiscal conditions, about financial planning and about audit results is provided throughout the college? Is this information sufficient in content and timing to support institutional and financial planning and financial management?

   c. The institution has sufficient cash flow and reserves to maintain stability, strategies for appropriate risk management, and realistic plans to meet financial emergencies and unforeseen occurrences.

      ◇ What is the ending balance of unrestricted funds for the institution's immediate past three years. Is this amount sufficient to maintain a reserve of 5% (the minimum needed for emergencies)?

      ◇ Does the institution have any other access to cash should the need arise?

      ◇ How does the institution receive its revenues? Does this receipt pose cash flow difficulties for the college? If so, how does the college address cash flow difficulties? (e.g., COPS, loans)?

      ◇ Has the institution sufficient insurance to cover its needs? Is the institution self-funded in any insurance categories? If so, does it have sufficient reserves to handle financial emergencies?

d. The institution practices effective oversight of finances, including management of financial aid, grants, externally funded programs, contractual relationships, auxiliary organizations or foundations, and institutional investments and assets.

- ◇ What are the institution's procedures for reviewing fiscal management? Are those regularly implemented?
- ◇ What evidence about fiscal management is provided by external audits and financial program reviews?
- ◇ Has the institution received any audit findings or negative reviews in recent years?

e. All financial resources, including those from auxiliary activities, fund-raising efforts, and grants are used with integrity in a manner consistent with the mission and goals of the institution.

- ◇ Are the institution's special funds audited or reviewed by funding agencies regularly?
- ◇ Do the audits demonstrate the integrity of financial management practices?

f. Contractual agreements with external entities are consistent with the mission and goals of the institution, governed by institutional policies, and contain appropriate provisions to maintain the integrity of the institution.[5]

- ◇ What contractual agreements exist, and are they consistent with institutional mission and goals?
- ◇ Does the institution have appropriate control over these contracts? Can it change or terminate contracts that don't meet its required standards of quality?

g. The institution regularly evaluates its financial management processes, and the results of the evaluation are used to improve financial management systems.

- ◇ Does the institution have an annual external audit to provide feedback on its processes.
- ◇ Does the institution review the effectiveness of its past fiscal planning as part of planning for current and future fiscal needs?
- ◇ Does the institution have a fiscal review process?

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard III

Listed below are examples of sources of evidence for Standard III:

Standard III Resources

A. Human Resources

- Evidence about how the institution determines human resource needs of programs and services.
- Evidence that the institution uses analyses in determining hiring priorities.
- Evidence, such as planning meeting minutes, that the institution systematically considers and relies on needs of programs and services in determining hiring priorities.
- Evidence that the institution has a reasonable means for deciding what employee qualifications are needed for each position.
- Evidence that the institution uses a clear and reasonable process for determining personnel selection criteria.
- Evidence that hiring procedures are written and consistently applied.
- Evidence that the institution verifies employee degrees, experience, and references of newly hired personnel.
- Evidence of a systematic process for determining personnel evaluationcriteria.
- Evidence that evaluation criteria are based on job responsibilities.
- Evidence that evaluation processes are written and followed.
- Evidence that evaluations are conducted regularly.
- Evidence that the institution uses the results of personnel evaluations for improvement.
- Evidence that the institution evaluates the effectiveness in producing student learning outcomes of teachers, tutors, and others involved in the teaching-learning process.
- Evidence that the institution applies an ethics document or documents for all personnel.
- Evidence that the institution employs a core of full-time faculty.
- Evidence that the institution employs qualified administrators and support staff in sufficient numbers.
- Evidence that the institution administers its personnel policies consistently and fairly.

- ❑ Evidence that the institution maintains personnel records safely.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution provides employees access to their records.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution has written policies on equity and diversity.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution is sensitive to issues of equity and diversity.
- ❑ Evidence that programs and services are designed to provide for the range of personnel needs at the institution.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution tracks, analyzes, and uses its employment equity record.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution treats its personnel and students.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution uses identified teaching and learning needs to determine professional development opportunities.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution evaluates professional development needs of its personnel.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution bases its programs on identified needs.
- ❑ Evidence about how participants are involved in the programs' evaluation
- ❑ Evidence that the institution assesses the use of its human resources.
- ❑ Evidence that institutional plans determine human resource allocation priorities.
- ❑ Evidence that human resource decisions are based on the results of evaluation of program and service needs.

B. Physical Resources

- ❑ Evidence about how the institution evaluates the safety and sufficiency of its facilities.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution provides adequate facilities for its programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence that off-campus sites are adequate to support programs conducted at those sites.
- ❑ Evidence that equipment supports the needs of its programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence that equipment supports the needs of the distance modes of delivery the college offers.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution plans and maintains its facilities.

- ❑ Evidence that the institution has considered the total cost of owner ship when making decisions about facilities and equipment.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution's bases its building plans on the needs of programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution has replacement and maintenance plans for equipment.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution uses its facilities and equipment effectively.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution constructs and maintains its facilities at all locations.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution evaluates its facilities.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution evaluates the physical resources needs of its programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution plans its facilities.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution makes decisions about equipment purchases.
- ❑ Evidence that long-range capital projects are based on institutional planning.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution assesses the use of its physical resources.
- ❑ Evidence that institutional plans determine physical resource priorities.
- ❑ Evidence that physical resource decisions are based on the results of evaluation of program and service needs.

C. Technology Resources

- ❑ Evidence about how the institution evaluates how well its technology meets the needs of its programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution evaluates how well its technology meets the need for college-wide communications, research, and operational systems.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution makes decisions about technology services, facilities, hardware, and software.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution evaluates the effectiveness of its technology.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution assesses the need for information technology training for students and personnel.
- ❑ Evidence that training is designed to meet the needs of students and personnel
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution plans and maintains its technology. infrastructure and equipment.

- ❑ Evidence that the institution's bases its technology plans on the needs of programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution has replacement and maintenance plans for its technology.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution uses and distributes its technology resources.
- ❑ Evidence about how the institution assesses the technology needs of its programs and services.
- ❑ Evidence that the institution assesses the use of its technology resources.
- ❑ Evidence that institutional plans determine technology resource priorities.
- ❑ Evidence that technology resource decisions are based on the results of evaluation of program and service needs.

D. Financial Resources

- ❑ Evidence that includes copies of annual budget, audits for past three years, financial plans associated with institutional plans, budget documents prepared to grant and other external funding, data showing financial planning is regularly evaluated and the results of that evaluation, documents showing institutional fiscal commitments for foreseeable future, including contracts for services, employee agreements, loans and other debt.
- ❑ Evidence that the mission and goals are used in short and long range financial planning, such as a list of financial goals, a grid showing financial contributions to meeting goals, or an introductory text to fiscal documents such as annual budgets, long range capital plans, long range financial plans, etc. that show relationship to educational goals as identified through institutional assessment and planning.
- ❑ Evidence showing the fiscal planning follows institutional planning in time sequence, and that funds are used to achieve institutional plans.
- ❑ Evidence that fiscal planning is evaluated on the basis of its contribution to achievement of institutional goals, not solely on the basis of accounting principles of good practice Evidence that the financial plans, including annual budget, capital plans, long term fiscal plans.
- ❑ Evidence that the documents describing the financial planning and budgeting processes and minutes or other records showing the institution has followed those processes.
- ❑ Evidence that there is an annual external audit.
- ❑ Evidence of a fiscal planning process.

Standard IV: Leadership and Governance

The institution recognizes and utilizes the contributions of leadership throughout the organization for continuous improvement of the institution. Governance roles are designed to facilitate decisions that support student learning programs and services and improve institutional effectiveness, while acknowledging the designated responsibilities of the governing board and the chief administrator.

A. Decision-Making Roles and Processes

The institution recognizes that ethical and effective leadership throughout the organization enables the institution to identify institutional values, set and achieve goals, learn, and improve.

1. Institutional leaders create an environment for empowerment, innovation, and institutional excellence. They encourage staff, faculty, administrators, and students, no matter what their official titles, to take initiative in improving the practices, programs, and services in which they are involved. When ideas for improvement have policy or significant institution-wide implications, systematic participative processes are used to assure effective discussion, planning, and implementation.

   - ◇ What do the statements about institutional goals tell you about the institution's commitment to excellence?
   - ◇ Are the institution's goals and values clearly articulated and understood by all? Can college staff tell you what those goals and values are?
   - ◇ Can staff describe their own roles in helping the institution achieve its goals?
   - ◇ What information about institutional performance is circulating and available to staff and students? Is the information kept current? Is it easily accessed, is it understandable? Is it regularly used in institutional discussions and decision-making sessions?
   - ◇ Do the institution's processes for institutional evaluation and review, and planning for improvements, provide venues where the evaluations of the institution's performance are made available to all staff?
   - ◇ Do institutional planning efforts provide opportunity for appropriate staff participation?
   - ◇ Is there a vehicle through which individuals can bring forward ideas for institutional improvement?
   - ◇ Does the institution articulate the responsibilities of individuals to develop ideas for improvements in their areas of responsibility?
   - ◇ Do individuals and groups at the institution use the governance process to enhance student learning?

2. The institution establishes and implements a written policy providing for faculty, staff, administrator, and student participation in decision-making processes. The policy specifies the manner in which individuals bring forward ideas from their constituencies and work together on appropriate policy, planning, and special-purpose bodies.

   a. Faculty and administrators have a substantive and clearly defined role in institutional governance and exercise a substantial voice in institutional policies, planning, and budget that relate to their areas of responsibility and expertise. Students and staff also have established mechanisms or organizations for providing input into institutional decisions.

      ◇ What do institutional policies and procedures describe as the roles for each group in governance, including planning and budget development?

   b. The institution relies on faculty, its academic senate or other appropriate faculty structures, the curriculum committee, and academic administrators for recommendations about student learning programs and services.

      ◇ What documents describe the official responsibilities and authority of the faculty and of academic administrators in curricular and other educational matters?

3. Through established governance structures, processes, and practices, the governing board, administrators, faculty, staff, and students work together for the good of the institution. These processes facilitate discussion of ideas and effective communication among the institution's constituencies.

   ◇ Do the written policies on governance procedures specify appropriate roles for all staff and students?Do these policies specify the academic roles of faculty in areas of student educational programs and services planning?

   ◇ Are staff and students well informed of their respective roles. Do staff participate as encouraged by these policies?Do the various groups work in collaborative effort on behalf of institutional improvements? Is the result of this effort actual institutional improvement?

   ◇ Is there effective communication at the college – clear, understood, widely available, current communication?

   ◇ Do staff at the college know essential information about institutional efforts to achieve goals and improve learning?

4. The institution advocates and demonstrates honesty and integrity in its relationships with external agencies. It agrees to comply with Accrediting Commission standards, policies, and guidelines, and Commission requirements for public disclosure, self study and other reports, team visits, and prior approval of substantive changes. The institution moves expeditiously to respond to recommendations made by the Commission.

   - ◇ What does documentation of the institution's past accreditation history show about integrity in its relationship with the commission – has it responded expeditiously and honestly to recommendations, are there citations indicating difficulty, etc.?

   - ◇ Are the institution's communications of institutional qualities or effectiveness to the public accurate?

   - ◇ What is the institution's track record in its relationship with the U.S. Department of Education?

5. The role of leadership and the institution's governance and decision-making structures and processes are regularly evaluated to assure their integrity and effectiveness. The institution widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

   - ◇ What process does the institution use to evaluate its governance and decision-making structures? Are the results communicated within the campus community?

   - ◇ Does the institution identify weaknesses and make needed improvements?

B. Board and Administrative Organization

In addition to the leadership of individuals and constituencies, institutions recognize the designated responsibilities of the governing board for setting policies and of the chief administrator for the effective operation of the institution. Multi-college districts/systems clearly define the organizational roles of the district/system and the colleges.[6]

1. The institution has a governing board that is responsible for establishing policies to assure the quality, integrity, and effectiveness of the student learning programs and services and the financial stability of the institution. The governing board adheres to a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the chief administrator for the college or the district/system.

   - ◇ Does the institution have a Policy Manual or other compilation of policy documents that show the Board's role in establishing said policy and reviewing it on a regular basis?

   - ◇ What statements about quality of program, integrity of institutional actions, and about effectiveness of student learning programs and services are to be found in the institution's board-established policies, mission statement, vision or philosophy statement, planning documents, or other statements of direction?

- What is the written policy describing selection of the chief administrator? Has the board followed it or another process?

a. The governing board is an independent policy-making body that reflects the public interest in board activities and decisions. Once the board reaches a decision, it acts as a whole. It advocates for and defends the institution and protects it from undue influence or pressure.

- Is the governing board appropriately representative of the public interest and lacking conflict of interest.

- Are less that half of Board members owners of the institution? Are a majority of governing board members non owners of the institution?

- Does the composition of the governing board reflect public interest in the institution?

b. The governing board establishes policies consistent with the mission statement to ensure the quality, integrity, and improvement of student learning programs and services and the resources necessary to support them.

- What policies, institutional goals or other formal statements exist that describe Board expectations for quality, integrity and improvement of student learning programs and services?

c. The governing board has ultimate responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity.

- Is the governing board independent – are its actions final, not subject to the actions of any other entity?

d. The institution or the governing board publishes the board bylaws and policies specifying the board's size, duties, responsibilities, structure, and operating procedures.

e. The governing board acts in a manner consistent with its policies and bylaws. The board regularly evaluates its policies and practices and revises them as necessary.

- Do the records of Board actions (minutes, resolutions) indicate that it acts consistent with its policies and bylaws?

- Does the Board have a system for evaluating and revising its policies on a regular basis? Is this system implemented?

f. The governing board has a program for board development and new member orientation. It has a mechanism for providing for continuity of board membership and staggered terms of office.

- What is the board's system for development and orientation?

- Does the Board development system address the board's need to learn about accreditation standards and expectations?

- ◇ Does the Board have a formal, written method of providing for continuing membership and staggered terms of office?

- ◇ Does the Board have a formal, written method of providing for continuing membership and staggered terms of office?

g. The governing board's self-evaluation processes for assessing board performance are clearly defined, implemented, and published in its policies or bylaws.

- ◇ What is the board self evaluation process as defined in its policies? Does that process as described likely to be an effective review?

- ◇ Does the policy call for regular self-evaluation? Does the institution's board regularly evaluate its own performance?

h. The governing board has a code of ethics that includes a clearly defined policy for dealing with behavior that violates its code.

- ◇ What is the Board's stated process for dealing with board behavior that is unethical? Is there any track record of the board implementing this process? What was the result?

i. The governing board is informed about and involved in the accreditation process.

- ◇ What kinds of training are provided to the Board about the accreditation process, its standards?

- ◇ Does the Board participate appropriately in institutional self-study and planning efforts?

- ◇ Do board actions, including planning and resource allocation, indicate a commitment to improvements planned as part of institutional self-evaluation and accreditation processes?

- ◇ Do Board actions reflect the commitment to supporting and improving student learning outcomes as reflected in the accreditation standards and expectations forinstitutional improvement?

- ◇ Is the Board informed of institutional reports due to the Commission, of Commission recommendations to the institution?

- ◇ Is the Board knowledgeable about accreditation standards, including those that apply to the Board?

- ◇ Does the Board assess its own performance using accreditation standards?

j. The governing board has the responsibility for selecting and evaluating the district/system chief administrator (most often known as the chancellor) in a multi-college district/system or the college chief administrator (most often known as the president) in the case of a single college. The governing board delegates full responsibility and authority to him/her to implement and administer board policies without board interference and holds him/her accountable for the operation of the district/system or college, respectively. In multi-college districts/systems, the governing board establishes a clearly defined policy for selecting and evaluating the presidents of the colleges.

◇ What is the established Board process for conducting search and selection processes for the chief administrator? Are those processes written?

◇ Has the Board used these processes in its most recent searches?

◇ How is the Board delegation of administrative authority to the chief administrator defined? In policy documents? In a contract with the chief administrator?

◇ Is this delegation clear to all parties?

◇ How effective is the Board in remaining focused at the policy level?

◇ Does the Board's evaluation of the chief administrator include mechanisms for evaluating performance on implementing board policies and achieving institutional goals?

◇ Does the Board set clear expectations for regular reports form the chief administrator on institutional performance?

◇ Does the Board set expectations for sufficient information on institutional performance to insure that it can fulfill its responsibility for educational quality, legal matters, and financial integrity?

2. The president has primary responsibility for the quality of theinstitution he/she leads. He/she provides effective leadership in planning, organizing, budgeting, selecting and developing personnel, and assessing institutional effectiveness.

a. The president plans, oversees, and evaluates an administrative structure organized and staffed to reflect the institution's purposes, size, and complexity. He/she delegates authority to administrators and others consistent with their responsibilities, as appropriate.

b. The president guides institutional improvement of the teaching and learning environment by the following:

- establishing a collegial process that sets values, goals, and priorities;
- ensuring that evaluation and planning rely on high quality research and analysis on external and internal conditions;
- ensuring that educational planning is integrated with resource planning and distribution to achieve student learning outcomes; and
- establishing procedures to evaluate overall institutional planning and implementation efforts.

- ◇ What does the president do to communicate institutional values, goals and direction?
- ◇ How familiar is the president with data and analyses of institutional performance.
- ◇ How does the president communicate the importance of a culture of evidence and a focus on student learning?
- ◇ Where does the research office report in the institution – does it have easy access to the President's office?
- ◇ What mechanisms has the president put in place to link institutional research, particularly research on student learning, institutional planning processes, resource allocation processes?

b. The president assures the implementation of statutes, regulations, and governing board policies and assures that institutional practices are consistent with institutional mission and policies.

c. The president effectively controls budget and expenditures.

d. The president works and communicates effectively with the communities served by the institution.

3. In multi-college districts or systems, the district/system provides primary leadership in setting and communicating expectations of educational excellence and integrity throughout the district/system and assures support for the effective operation of the colleges. It establishes clearly defined roles of authority and responsibility between the colleges and the district/system and acts as the liaison between the colleges and the governing board.[7]

a. The district/system clearly delineates and communicates the operational responsibilities and functions of the district/system from those of the colleges and consistently adheres to this delineation in practice.

- ◇ Does the system have a written delineation of responsibilities? Are institutional and system staff knowledgeable of this delination?

b. The district/system provides effective services that support the colleges in their missions and functions.

- ◇ What feedback mechanisms does the system have in place to allow assessment of the effectiveness of system services?
- ◇ Are system services regular evaluated with regard to their support for institutional missions and functions?

c. The district/system provides fair distribution of resources that are adequate to support the effective operations of the colleges.

- ◇ What is the system's method of distributing resources to its institutions? Is the system based in a realistic assessment of needs of each institution? Is it even-handed?

d. The district/system effectively controls its expenditures.

- ◇ What are the institution's financial control mechanisms? Does the institution follow standard good practice in fiscal management?
- ◇ Does the institution consistently end the fiscal year with an positive ending balance?
- ◇ What do the institution's most recent annual audits reveal about control of expenditures?

e. The chancellor gives full responsibility and authority to the presidents of the colleges to implement and administer delegated district/system policies without his/her interference and holds them accountable for the operation of the colleges.

f. The district/system acts as the liaison between the colleges and the governing board. The district/system and the colleges use effective methods of communication, and they exchange information in a timely manner.

- ◇ What are the methods of working jointly that the system and the institutions use?
- ◇ Do these methods result in clear and timely communications in all directions?
- ◇ Are the institutions well-informed about system issues, Board actions and interests that have an impact on their operations, educational quality, stability or ability to provide high quality education?

g. The district/system regularly evaluates district/system role delineation and governance and decision-making structures and processes to assure their integrity and effectiveness in assisting the colleges in meeting educational goals. The district/system widely communicates the results of these evaluations and uses them as the basis for improvement.

- ◇ What are the system's methods for evaluating its effectiveness?
- ◇ Does it conduct regular assessments? How does it communicate the results?

Sources of Evidence: Examples for Standard IV

Listed below are examples of sources of evidence for Standard IV:

A: Decision-Making Roles and Processes

- Evidence that shows Board and other governance policies and descriptions of the participation of constituencies in decision-making bodies.
- Evidence that includes documents showing the transmission of recommendations from faculty and academic administrators to decision-making bodies, and descriptions of the institution's information and decision-making process.
- Evidence that includes copies of governance policies and procedures, the composition of governance bodies, minutes of meetings, and documents showing the roles academic staff plan in reviewing and planning student learning programs and services.
- Evidence that includes evaluations and analyses the institution conducts of its governing and decision making processes, and the form of communication of same to the community.
- Evidence that includes the Policy Manual, institutional statement of mission, vision or philosophy, and institutional planning documents.

B. Board and Administrative Organization

- Evidence that includes published statements of institutional goals that reference the Board's expectations for student learning and quality of education.
- Evidence that includes documents describing the authority of the Board; the absence of any external, higher authority than the Board; descriptions of the Board appointment and replacement process.
- Evidence that includes the published bylaws.
- Evidence that includes Board minutes or a schedule showing Board evaluation of policies.
- Evidence that includes the materials from Board training workshops.
- Evidence that includes the policy on Board membership, appointment and replacement.
- Evidence that includes the board's policy and instruments used for self evaluation, analyses and reports on the last few self-evaluations completed.
- Evidence that includes the board policy statement of ethics.

- ❑ Evidence that includes Board minutes, statements to college constituents on this delegation of authority, the Board policy manual, any contracts with administrators that specify delegation of authority, Board agreements with faculty bodies regarding delegation of authority.

- ❑ Evidence that includes budget documents and external audits showing ending year balances, audit exceptions (if any).

- ❑ Evidence that includes the results of surveys, other evaluations of the president's activities directed toward the communities served by the institutions.

- ❑ Evidence that includes surveys and other evaluative instruments, the results of evaluation. Evidence that includes descriptions of funding rules or formulas, committee minutes or other documents showing the system has assessed the needs of each institution.

- ❑ Evidence that includes financial policies and manuals, the content of internal audits and reviews, annual external audits, fiscal program reviews conducted by other agencies, and the annual Budget documents.

- ❑ Evidence that includes any formal delineation of responsibilities that might be found in district/college documents, including descriptions of job duties, descriptions contained in employment contracts, and the district mapping provided to the institutions and the Commission.

- ❑ Evidence: Examples of written or other recorded communications.

- ❑ Evidence that would include institutional analyses of performance, including fact books, reports, web page data portfolios, publications that describe research on institutional performance.

- ❑ Evidence that would include institutional analyses of performance, including fact books, reports, web page data portfolios, publications that describe research on institutional performance.

- ❑ Evidence that includes written information about institutional planning processes, minutes of meetings, records of participation in institutional evaluation and planning sessions.

- ❑ Evidence that this all is working would be evidence that the rates of student progress through the institution and levels of student learning are increasing.

- ❑ Evidence that includes the system's evaluation instruments, the results of the evaluation, and plans for improvement increasing.

- ❑ Evidence that multi-college systems develop a "map" or description of district and college functions that delineates and distinguishes them clearly.

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